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L E T T E R
TO THE
P E O P L E
O F
I R E L A N D.

1775

L E T T E R



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O F

I R E L A N D

A
L E T T E R

TO THE

P E O P L E

OF

I R E L A N D,

People

ON THE SUBJECT OF

F I S H E R I E S.



D U B L I N:

PRINTED FOR R. MONCRIEFFE, IN CAPEL-STREET.

M, DCC, LXXV.

LETTER

TO THE

PEOPLE



IRISH

ON THE SUBJECT OF

FISHES



DUBLIN

PRINTED FOR R. MONAGHAN, IN CAPT. STREET.

MDCCLXXXV.

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the contracted Views of the English
in many Articles of Commerce, and

A

L E T T E R

TO THE

PEOPLE OF IRELAND, &c.

IT is the Remark of an eminent
French Writer, that no People on
the Globe understand better how to
provide for the Extension of Com-
merce and Security of Liberty than
the English: Yet, in Ireland, a Part

not

not inconsiderable of the British Empire, there is no Subject that causes more general Murmur than the contracted Views of the English in many Articles of Commerce, and the Partiality of Administration to confined local Interests, while more extended Plans are intirely neglected. It is not uncommon to hear what a flourishing Kingdom Ireland would be, what a Gem in the Crown of its Monarch, if it was at Liberty to employ the Means of Commerce which Providence hath given it, and how desirous it is to employ them in Conjunction with the Parent Country, not as a Rival, but as a Friend and a Hand-maid to support the

the Capital of the Empire, how convenient its Ports are for every Species of Commerce; what Migrations of its People for Want of Employment; what Poverty from its many Restraints; and what Danger threatens its principal Manufacture from the Reduction of its Inhabitants and the consequent increased Price of Labour.

IN a Kingdom where these are Grounds of Complaint, it is reasonable to think that every Open to the Extension of Commerce, would be received as a substantial Benefit, and an Ardour to engage would be proportioned to the Prospect of Advantage. There is I presume no Person so divested
of

of Humanity as to take Pleasure in the present State of the Plantations, or with a Continuance of Hostilities where even Victory is but a Waste of Empire. But the Restriction of the Colonies should be an additional Inducement, from Motives of private and public Emolument, to take the full Benefit of the Privileges extended to this Kingdom, that as little as possible may be lost to the whole Empire; and every prudent Man must grieve, if the Opportunity is suffered to pass away without Improvement, and Foreigners are left to derive from our public Distresses such Advantages as improved by us would alleviate, and unimproved must necessarily

necessarily aggravate Them. A Neglect of such a Kind is co-operating in the Ruin of the Empire, and in that Ruin every Individual is involved.

LET it not be imagined, That the Privileges extended to this Kingdom, in respect of Fisheries, were merely consequential of the Restrictions of the Plantations; they were Objects in the Minds of the British Ministers, and in the Hearts of the present Chief Governor of Ireland, long before those Restrictions were thought necessary; they were seriously meditated as the just Rewards of Loyalty and unshaken Attachment

ment to the Parent Country, and if duly attended to, may prove the Sources of permanent Riches and Strength.

It is well known that the four Northern Provinces of America, the most populous for the Extent of their Territory, owed their Increase and supported their Commerce by Fishing : It is a Trade of all others the most inviting ; it is but to take and use what God hath given in Abundance ; the Element that breeds, matures its Inhabitants, without the Nurture or Care of Man : Storms may disturb or delay the Gathering ; but the Harvest remains uninjured.

No:

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No oppressive Lord can limit the Labour of the Mariner to the Rood or the Perch; he starts his Game where he finds it; pursues it as far as he pleases; and all that his Labour can procure is his own, Rent free, and Tythe free. The Sea is the Element of the Poor, and Industry the Proprietor of its Treasures.

THE Dutch, with hardly Materials in their own Country for a few open Boats, pursued their Fishing Trade, 'till they accumulated a Sufficiency to purchase Ships; these were sent wherever Materials for Ship-building could be had; Magazines

ships were formed, and thence come those Fleets that traverse the Seas from the Texel to the Ganges, and have acquired the Name of Carriers for the World. From a few Fishermen's Boats, their Republic arose to a Grandeur, that disputed Superiority by Sea and Land with the greatest Monarchs; sent forth Fleets and established Colonies in the remotest Parts of the Globe, and still upholds a Dominion, that first sprung from, and is yet maintained by the Sea.

The Hamburgers endeavoured to imitate the Hollanders; but they were sometimes frozen up, and at other

other Times, wanted Winds, to take them out of Port; and the Hollanders were at every Market before them; even the Hollanders every Year are ice-lock'd a while, but they persevere and are successful.

SKILL and **Industry** are necessary in this Trade, but both are in the Hands of the Poor, and the Incentiment is great, for the Reward is certain. So convinced by long Experience are the Dutch of a sure Profit, that if one Year in seven proves favourable they account the Trade gainful.

It appears from good Authority, that as early as the Year 1615, the French, Biscayners and Portuguese made two Voyages yearly to Newfoundland with 400 Sail of Ships, and gained incredible Wealth. About the same Period, besides the Hollanders, the French of Picardy had an hundred Sail of Herring Busses every Summer in his Majesty's Seas, and at this very Time the French are every Year employed on the Coasts of Ireland.

THE first spirited Act to encourage this profitable Trade in Ireland passed in the 3d of his present Majesty,

jefty, c. 24. The Purposes of the Act are, to employ the industrious Poor, to improve his Majesty's Revenue, to provide a Nursery of Seamen for the Navy of Great Britain, and *prevent French Ships and Boats from fishing on the Coast of Ireland.*

By this Act a Bounty of Twenty Shillings a Ton is given to English and Irish-built Ships, not under twenty Tons, employed in fishing on the Coast; the Bounty not to be paid to any Ship for more than one Hundred Tons.

THE

THE Act also gives, £. s. d.

For every Ton of Oil
extracted from Whales on
the Coast and manufac-
tured in the Kingdom 3 0 0

For every Ton of Oil
extracted from other Fish
and here manufactured 1 10 0

For every Hundred Weight
of Whale Fins, commonly
called Whalebone, taken
on the Coast and manu-
factured here - 4 0 0

AND further to encourage the
Trade of Fishing, the following Boun-
ties are given upon Exportation :

FOR

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For every Barrel of £ s. d.
white Herrings - - - 0 2 0

For every Barrel of
Mackarel - - - - 0 2 6

For every six Score of
Ling - - - - 0 5 0

For every six Score of
Hake, Haddick, Cod-fish
and Congar Eel - - - 0 3 0

For every Tierce where-
in wet Fish well cured
shall be pack'd - - - 0 4 3

That this Act hath in some Degree
produced the desired Effects, cannot
be controverted. The Bounty paid
for fishing on the Coast in the Year
1771, amounted to 9459*l.* 4*s.* and

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the

the Men employed to 1774. In the Year 1772, the Bounty paid amounted to 11440 *l.* 3*s.* 10*d.* and the Men employed to 2146; here was an Increase of 372 Seamen in one Year. It is indeed to be lamented that so many Frauds are daily practised to obtain the Bounties without complying with the Laws, as appears by the Petition of the Universal Fishing Company, to the House of Commons in the Session of 1773.

BUT laudable as the Purpose of this Act is, it could reach only to the Coast of this Kingdom: The Newfoundland and Greenland Seas, those great Mines of unfailing Treasure,

were

were occupied only by the English,
nor was it possible for this Kingdom,
even with a Liberty of fishing there,
to carry on a profitable Trade with-
out the same Bounties that England
gave to her own Shipping.

By the Act passed in the last
Session of Parliament, in Great Bri-
tain, these Sources of Wealth are
in a great Degree opened to us.

Any Ship belonging to Ireland,
of the Burthen of 50 Tons, naviga-
ted by 15 Men, and clearing out
from some Port in Great Britain,
may trade to the Banks of New-

foundland, and shall be intituled equally with Ships belonging to England to the following Bounties.

THE twenty-five Vessels that shall *first* arrive at the Island of Newfoundland, from the Banks thereof, with a Cargo of Fish taken there, consisting of Ten Thousand Fish by the Tale at least, and, after landing the same within certain Limits of the Island, shall proceed again to the Banks, and return to the said Island with another Cargo, shall be intituled, each Ship to forty Pounds.

ONE hundred Vessels, which shall arrive next, in Order of Time, with a like Cargo; and proceed again to the Banks, and return in like Manner, shall be intituled, each Ship to twenty Pounds.

AND one hundred other Vessels which shall arrive next, in Order of Time, with a like Cargo; and proceed again to the Banks, and return in like Manner, shall be intituled, each Ship to ten Pounds.

THUS a Bounty of 4000*l.* per annum, is given indiscriminately to Irish and English Adventurers, as

an Incitement to pursue this beneficial Trade.

It will be said, here is a Difficulty imposed on the Irish Vessel that She must clear out from some Port in Great Britain, in order to be intitled to this Bounty. But this is only a Balance to the Advantage which Ireland enjoys by its Proximity to Newfoundland. If Great Britain had given the Bounty to Ships clearing out from Ireland; the whole Bounty would have centered here; and the Inhabitants of the Western Coasts of England, with Justice might have said, We have given

given a Bounty to Ireland, to the Discouragement of English Fisheries.

By the same Act, in order to encourage the Whale Fishery, on the Coasts of Newfoundland, and in the Seas adjacent, Bounties are given for the Term of Eleven Years, to Five Vessels, Irish, Or English, clearing out from Ireland, or England, and returning to any Port in England.

The Right of drying Fish on the Shores of Newfoundland, is given to the Subjects of his Majesty's British Dominions in Europe, with

ent of Ireland of value £. s. d.

To the Vessel bringing

the greatest Quantity of

Oil - - - 500 0 0

To the Vessel bringing the

next greatest Quantity 400 0 0

To the Vessel bringing the

next greatest Quantity 300 0 0

To the Vessel bringing the

next greatest Quantity 200 0 0

And to the 5th Vessel 100 0 0

to be paid in two Months after the
Expiration of the Year.

THE Right of drying Fish on the
Shores of Newfoundland, is given to
all the Subjects of his Majesty's
British Dominions in Europe, with
an

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an Exclusion of his Subjects arriving there from any other Country.

SHIPS belonging to Ireland may import into Great Britain Oil or Blubber of Fish or other Creatures living in the Sea, or Whale Fins taken in any Part of the Ocean *Duty free.*

THIS Privilege was given by the 25th of C. II. only to Ships properly belonging to England, Wales, or Berwick upon Tweed.

RAW and undressed Seal Skins also may be imported into Great Britain *Duty-free*, in any Vessels belonging

belonging to and fitted out from
Ireland.

A DUTY of one Shilling per Gallon is imposed on all Rum and other Spirits imported into Newfoundland, from the Colonies and Plantations in America.

PROVISIONS and all necessary Implements for Fishing, being the Product or Manufacture of Great Britain or Ireland, may be shipped in and transported *directly* from Ireland to Newfoundland, on board any Ship that may lawfully trade there. Hereby any Vessel may clear out directly from Ireland to Newfoundland to fish for Cod and small Fish, though such only as clear out
from

from Great Britain are intitled to the British Bounty: But if Ireland, availing herself of her present fortunate Influence in the Councils of Great Britain, shall give the like Bounties of forty, twenty, and ten Pounds to its own Shipping; (and the same Liberality of Mind which hath anxiously laboured for an Extension of our Commerce, will naturally approve this Measure) the Encouragement here will be greater in Proportion, as this Kingdom lies more favourably for the Trade.

By an Act of the 11th of his present Majesty, in order to encourage the Greenland and Whale Fishery, Bounties are given to Ships fitted out from Great Britain, or
any

any of his Majesty's Dominions in America.

By the Act of the last Session, these Bounties are extended to Ships fitted out *from Ireland* for the Greenland Seas, Davis's Streights and the adjacent Seas, to import Whale Fins, Oil and Blubber, into Great Britain.

EVERY Ship of the Burthen of 200 Tons or under, intituled to this Bounty, shall have on Board, forty fishing Lines 120 Fathoms each, forty Harpoon Irons, four Boats with seven Men including a Harpooner a Steersman and a Line-manager to each Boat, making in the Whole

Whole 28 Men, besides the Master and Surgeon, with six Months Provision at least, and every Ship of larger Burthen, shall have an Increase of six Men, one Boat, ten such Lines, and ten Harpoon Irons for every fifty Tons above 200, with Provisions in Proportion.—Every Ship employed in this Fishery shall have on Board an Apprentice indentured for three Years at least, for every fifty Tons Burthen, who shall be accounted as one of the Men.

Thus equipped, every such Ship proceeding on the said Fishery from the 25th Day of December 1775, to the 25th Day of December 1776, shall be intituled to the Sum of 2*l*. per Ton English.

EVERY

30 A LETTER TO THE

EVERY such Ship as shall proceed on the said Fishery, from the 25th Day of December 1776 to the 25th Day of December 1781, shall be intitled to the Sum of 14s. per Ton.

And every such Ship as shall proceed on the said Fishery, from the 25th Day of December 1781 to the 25th Day of December 1786, shall be intitled to the Sum of 17s. per Ton.

SOME may under-rate these Favours, but in a Country remarkable as this is for Loyalty and Gratitude, they will be few, and when those few will be intitled to the Sum of 17s. per Ton English.

EVERY

few shall consider the Situation of Ireland and its Ports, they will see that the Advantage in Respect of the Bounties, particularly for the Whale Fisheries, is greatest on the Part of Ireland; and possibly this Consideration, and the Cheapness of victualling here, may have some Weight in promoting Partnerships between the two Kingdoms, for their mutual Advantage in Fishing and Exportation.

WHOEVER will cast his Eyes upon a Map will find at the first View that no Country in Europe is situated so conveniently for the Trade of Newfoundland and Greenland as Ireland :

Ireland: The same Sea washes them all, they are the nearest Neighbours of the old and new World: The Western Ports of Ireland open directly to this Trade; easterly Winds, the most favourable for carrying Ships to it, prevail generally in Spring, and westerly Winds as generally in Autumn, to bring them home: It is only to set the Rudder, and lash it, and then prepare for the Work they go about; so that it is self-evident, that in Cases where Ships sail directly from Ireland, the Advantage is on the Side of this Kingdom.

TAKEN

TAKE a general View of the Fishing Trade, with its Train of Consequences, and perhaps another cannot be found so beneficial. How many Trades become necessary to it? Shipwrights, Carpenters, Smiths, Coopers, Net-makers, Rope-makers, Hoop-makers and Pully-makers; and in all these the Poor, in some the Lame, and even the Blind can be employed: Bakers also are necessary, and the Brewery, which the pernicious Use of Spirits hath almost destroyed, will receive new Employment.

POSSIBLY it will be said, that this Trade will draw Men from the Loom, and the Linen Manufacture

C

will

will be injured. But this is not to be feared; a few Persons of rambling Dispositions, impatient of a sedentary Life, of every thing that is settled, may prefer a Life accompanied by more Variety; but the Linen Manufacture will not suffer thereby, for such Persons make twice their Number idle and unprofitable, and are an Injury, not a Service to quiet regular Trades. In another View, the Advantage to the Linen Trade will be great, by increasing the Necessaries of Life, and keeping the Price of Labour, at that moderate Rate, whereby the Individual, and the Public, may thrive together.

and the Linen Manufacture **VIEW**

VIEW the Fishing Trade as a Source of Strength and a Multitude of Inhabitants well employed are the Wealth and Strength of a Nation. Population thrives nowhere more than in Fishing Towns; you see them swarming with Children, they partake of the Fertility of the Element they border on: The Exercise of the Fishermen in the Summer Months, their Ease in the Winter, the Lives of the Women healthful without Fatigue, the very Air of the Sea, all are favourable to Population. The first Thing the Children learn is, what they see constantly practised, to be Mariners. Considered therefore as a Source of

C 2 Strength,

Strength, this Trade has a pre-emi-
nent Value; and this Strength will
be of more Importance to Great
Britain, as it is more near and ready
for Use, another Arm of Defence
manageable by the same Direction
and at the same Instant.

IN Respect of Gain, as I am not a
mercantile Man, I cannot speak
from Experience, I will therefore
state the Expence and the Profit,
as I find them in a respectable
Author, * but who wrote many
Years ago. A Buſs, he ſays, with
all her Furniture, as Maſts, Sails,
Anchors,

* *Author of the Lex Mercatoria.*

Anchors, Cables, and with all her fishing Implements and Appurtenances, at the first provided all new, she being between 30 and 40 Last, will cost 500*l*. and may continue twenty Years, with small Cost and Reparation; but the yearly Wear of her Tackle and her Nets will cost eighty Pounds; and the whole Charge of keeping her at Sea for the whole Summer, or three Voyages, for the Filling of a hundred Last of Cask or Barrels is as follows,

100 Last

	£.
100 Last of Barrels - - -	72
For Salt four Months - - -	88
Beer four Months - - -	42
Bread four Months - - -	21
Bacon and Butter - - -	18
Pease and Billets - - -	6
Men's Wages four Months	88
	<hr/>
	£. 335

An hundred Last of Barrels, filled
and sold at ten Pounds the Last, bring
1000 £ . Deduct the Charge, and the
Profit is 665 £ . and if you deduct
one hundred Pounds for the Wearing
of the Ship and the Reparation of
her Nets, against the next Summer,
yet

yet still there remains 565 £ . clear Gains, by one Bus in one Year, rating the Herrings sold, but at Ten Pounds the Last, which is commonly sold by the Hollanders at Dantick, for Fifteen and Twenty. Thus the whole Expence of the Bus is paid by one Summer's Industry, and 65 £ . in the Merchant's Pocket.

If half of this Profit can be made, is there a Trade more gainful? Persuaded by the Authority of every Writer on the Subject, and the Experience of those Nations, which have pursued this Species of Commerce, that no other is attended with happier Consequences, I sincerely

cerely with the People of this Kingdom would shew half the Zeal and unwearied Affiduity, in taking Benefit of the Privileges now extended to them, which the noble Lord at the Head of this Kingdom, and his Secretary, manifested in obtaining them.

by one Sumner's Indenture, and
as in the Merchant's Pocket

It half of this Profit can be made
is there a Trade more gainful? Per-

twined by the Nation of every

Writer on the Subject, and the Ex-

perience of those Nations, which

have pursued the Policy of Com-

merce, that no other is attended

with happier Consequences. I fin-

ally

